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United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers Union

By JAMES B. CAREY
General President, U. E. R. M. W. A.

Although only about 4 years old, the United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers of America has already established a Nation-wide record in collective bargaining and in organizing workers in the electrical manufacturing and machine industry. From a nucleus of 18 local unions with an aggregate membership of approximately 25,000 in March 1936, the union has grown to 191 locals in the United States and Canada, with a membership of about 160,000. It has established contractual relations with most of the largest manufacturing companies in the industry and serves as the collective-bargaining agency for about three-fourths of the approximately 350,000 workers normally employed in the production of electric equipment, appliances, and machinery.

The amazing expansion of this organization can be explained by its realistic approach to the membership as well as to employers in the industry. The first is clearly expressed in the preamble to the constitution of the union which reads in part as follows: "*We, the electrical, radio and machine workers* form an organization which unites all workers in our industry on an industrial basis, and rank and file control, regardless of craft, age, sex, nationality, race, creed or political beliefs, and pursue at all times a policy of aggressive struggle to improve our conditions."

In collective bargaining, the electrical workers' union has taken an aggressive but common-sense attitude toward the problems of wages, production, and financial policies of the individual companies and their ability to meet the demands of the workers. It has successfully impressed upon the membership that once a contract is signed with an employer, all workers must abide scrupulously by its terms. As a result, the union has been able to renew its contracts in practically every case and in many instances to improve the working conditions of the wage earners. The progress of the union has also been greatly aided by Federal and State laws enacted since 1933, including the National Industrial Recovery Act, the National Labor Relations Act, and the Walsh-Healey Act.

ORIGIN OF UNION

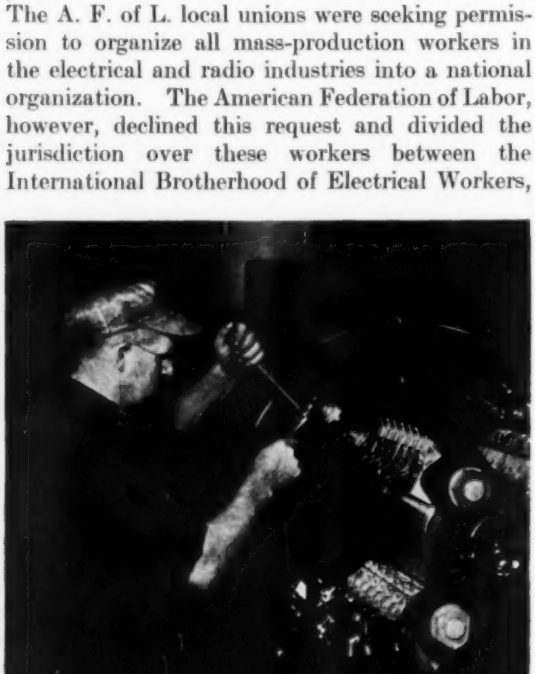
Prior to the enactment of the National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933, workers in the rapidly expanding electrical and radio manufacturing industry were almost entirely unorganized. Several large firms maintained company unions set up after the World War, a few skilled workers belonged to craft unions, and here and there a small independent local labor organization existed, but the largest majority of workers in the industry remained unorganized.

Stimulated by section 7a of the N. I. R. A., which specifically recognized the right of employees to organize into unions and to bargain collectively, the great bulk of workers in the electrical manufacturing industry for the first time became union conscious. Regardless of craft or skill, workers in numerous plants spontaneously formed local unions to negotiate with employers on wages and hours and other conditions of work. Some of these locals became affiliated with the A. F. of L. as "federal labor unions." Others operated independently.

It was not long, however, before the organized workers in the various electrical and machine manufacturing plants realized the need for a united organization. The first step in this direction came with the formation of a loose council composed of local A. F. of L. unions and

of several independent organizations of workers in the industry.

The council's life was, however, very short. It was dissolved in 1934 upon instructions of the president of the American Federation of Labor. The A. F. of L. local unions were seeking permission to organize all mass-production workers in the electrical and radio industries into a national organization. The American Federation of Labor, however, declined this request and divided the jurisdiction over these workers between the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers,



At Work on Heavy Electrical Equipment

the International Association of Machinists, and other craft unions. Affiliated with the American Federation of Labor.

Shortly thereafter, in March 1936, representatives of 18 local unions with an aggregate membership of approximately 25,000 workers convened in Buffalo, N. Y., and formed the United Electrical and Radio Workers of America. In November 1936 the union became the first newly organized labor organization in a mass-production industry to affiliate with the C. I. O. Its jurisdiction was extended by the 1937 convention to include workers employed in machine shops and in the manufacture of machine tools and dies. At that time it also adopted its present name of United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers of America.

RAPID GROWTH

Many of the locals that participated in the March 1936 convention already had collective-bargaining agreements with their employers. Several of the locals had been through prolonged struggles to organize and to obtain recognition as the bargaining agency for the workers in their plants. This experience has greatly aided the newly formed national organization in conducting a widespread membership campaign.

In some plants the new national union had little or no difficulty in convincing management that it represented the majority of the employees in the plant. In other cases this was accomplished only after prolonged controversy, including elections under the auspices of the National Labor Relations Board and occasionally even involving the workers in a strike or lock-out. Successful strikes for union recognition in two electrical manufacturing plants in St. Louis, for instance, resulted in almost 100 percent organization of the electrical workers in that city. Similar success crowned the work of the union in a number of other cities, and at its 1937 convention the organization was able to report approximately 275 locals with over 70,000 dues-paying members.

With substantial progress recorded in its first major task of building a strong organization, the union concentrated most of its energies on negotiating collective contracts as a means of protecting the interest of its membership. By the end of July 1938 it had a total of 213 contracts, including some of the largest manufacturers of electrical equipment and appliances. Outstanding among these were the contracts signed with the General Electric Co., covering 7 plants and approximately 30,000 workers, the RCA radio factory with 12,000 workers, and the Allis Chalmers Co., covering 2 plants with about 1,500 workers.

This record of collective agreements was accomplished between the summer of 1937 and the summer of 1938, a period of pronounced slump in the Nation's industrial activity. Unemployment in the radio and electrical industry was widespread, and some employers resisted the union through refusal to bargain or by means of a lock-out. Local unions, however, were cautioned by the national office against strikes that could possibly be avoided and were instructed to seek peaceful solutions of their problems. As a result of this constructive policy of patient negotiation, 78 major agreements which had expired during

the year were renewed, many with increased wages and better working conditions.

Improved economic conditions in the industry since the middle of 1938 and the persistent policy of the United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers Union in promoting peaceful and stable labor relations paved the way for further expansion of collective bargaining between the union and the employers in the industry. As of March 1940 the union reported 330 signed contracts covering about 158,000 workers and 30 oral agreements covering an additional 75,000 workers.

The steady growth of the union is also attested to by its record in National Labor Relations Board elections. From October 1935 to March 1940, the union participated in 134 and won 107 elections. Of the approximately 86,000 workers participating in these elections nearly 60,000 or about 70 percent voted for the United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers of America.

TERMS OF AGREEMENTS

Analysis of 202 agreements with employers reported at the union's 1939 convention reveals that all but 5 of these agreements stipulated the UERMWA as the sole collective-bargaining agency for the workers in the plant. Slightly more than half of the contracts provided either for a closed shop—that is, that all the workers hired must be members of the union—or for a union shop, with management having the right to hire workers in the open market but these workers must join the union within a specified time after having been placed on the job.

More than half of the workers covered by the union contracts are employed in the manufacture of heavy electrical equipment, such as motors, generators, and locomotives. Nearly a quarter of the workers under union agreements make radios, radio parts, and tubes, and the remainder (22 percent) work in factories producing refrigerators, washing machines, stoves, toasters, batteries, wire and cable, machinery, and a multitude of other general electrical appliances and gadgets.

Wages.—The wide variety of products made by members of the union in the different branches of the electrical manufacturing industry makes it impossible to determine a general level of earnings which would be representative of the entire industry. Some branches, such as manufacture of generators, transformers, and other intricate electrical apparatus, require highly skilled workers, whose earnings are therefore relatively high. Other branches, such as the manufacture of electric lamps and fuses or radio parts, employ large numbers of semiskilled or unskilled workers, largely women, who are among the lowest-paid groups in the industry.

The wage structure of the industry is also complicated by the prevalence of numerous bonus and other wage-incentive systems designed to stimulate greater output. To assure workers that they will earn at least a definite amount per hour, minimum hourly rates of pay have been established to serve as a floor to the wage structure. Although as a long-term policy the union favors the payment of wages to all workers on a straight hourly basis, the piece-rate basis has as yet been eliminated in only a few cases.

Soldering Small Electrical Parts

Hours.—Most workers in the electrical and radio manufacturing industry now work 8 hours a day, 5 days a week. A few agreements provide for a workweek of less than 40 hours, and about one-fifth of the union agreements permit a workweek in excess of 40 hours. Overtime is generally com-

pensated at one and one-half times the regular rates of pay.

Some branches of the industry, notably radio manufacturing, have pronounced busy and slack seasons. Some of the agreements negotiated with radio manufacturers therefore permit a slightly longer workweek during the busy season. Many of these agreements also provide that during the slack season the scheduled hours of work be reduced to 32 or even as low as 24 hours per week, thus sharing the available work among a maximum number of workers.

Seniority.—The union favors straight plant seniority. This means that workers with the greatest length of service in the plant must be given preference in any department of the plant on the work they are capable of performing. In addition, they are entitled to the better jobs in case of expansion and are the last to be laid off when work is slack.

Exceptions to this basic policy are permitted by the union only if the employer proves that the worker with less seniority is especially qualified for a specific job. Also, in order to protect shop stewards who are responsible for the grievance work in the plant, the union frequently insists that these representatives of the workers be placed at the top of the seniority list.

Vacations With Pay.—Prior to the organization of the UERMWA, electrical workers had vacations with pay in relatively few plants. Now an increasingly large number of workers in the electrical manufacturing and machine industry are enjoying paid vacations each year. About half of the union agreements provide for annual paid vacations. In some agreements, a week's vacation is specified, while in others the length of the vacation is determined by the length of the employees' service.

HANDLING GRIEVANCES

The union's job is not finished with the signing of a contract covering union recognition, wages, hours, seniority, vacations with pay, and similar problems. Suitable machinery must be established in each plant to deal with grievances which arise almost daily over the interpretation and the application of the terms of the agreement. This is provided in the shop steward system.

The shop steward in most plants is the nerve center of the grievance work affecting his department or section. He is elected by the workers employed in the department and hears and considers their grievances and seeks an adjustment with the foreman concerned. If a satisfactory solution cannot be worked out with the foreman, the steward brings the issue before the general foreman or superintendent of the plant. If the grievance still remains unsolved, the steward presents the case to his fellow stewards in the plant, who together comprise the stewards' council. If it is decided to press for further adjustment of the grievance, the council instructs its grievance board, a small committee composed of several stewards and the president of the local union, to seek a settlement with officials of the company. Finally, should this attempt at adjustment fail, the dispute is referred to arbitration, in accordance with the terms outlined in the agreement.

When no written agreement exists, or no procedure for handling grievances has been provided, local unions are advised by the national office to request the Conciliation Service of the United States Department of Labor to intercede and attempt to mediate the dispute before a strike is called. If the controversy involves a violation of the National Labor Relations Act, the case must first be placed before the National Labor Relations Board.

Handling grievances is perhaps the major task of shop stewards, but it is by no means their only function. Stewards are usually responsible for the collecting of dues, signing up of nonmembers, calling departmental union meetings, and seeing that both members and foremen abide by the terms of the contract. They also are charged with the responsibility of maintaining harmonious relations in their work unit and of preventing any friction, disputes, or unauthorized stoppages of work.

The council of shop stewards is empowered to discuss with management such problems as threatened lay-offs, revision of piece rates or wages, hours of work, overtime rates of pay, speed-up, and other issues affecting workers in their plants. In such broad problems the council is generally required to obtain previous approval of the membership in the local union. The council also has the power to summon before it members who have committed minor infractions of union rules or who are delinquent in dues payment, and take such appropriate action as it deems warranted.

Bringing Electric Power to the Farm

HARRY SLATTERY

Rural Electrification Administrator

More farms in the United States were supplied with electric light and power during the last 5 years than in the entire preceding half century of the existence of the electric-power industry. Today approximately 1,700,000 American farms or 1 farm in 4 obtains electric service from a central station. In marked contrast, 5 years ago only 744,000 farms or 1 farm in 10 had such service. This amazing record of progress in rural electrification is largely the result of the Federal rural electrification program inaugurated in 1935 to supply farmers with electric power for their farms and homes.

Prior to the establishment of the Rural Electrification Administration, private utility companies had built some lines in rural sections of the country, but for the most part these companies concentrated their operations in urban and densely populated suburban areas. The development of the Nation-wide Federal R. E. A. program stimulated private utility companies to extend their facilities to farmers. However, because of high construction costs, private utility lines reached only the more prosperous and thickly settled parts of a farm region. Isolated farms and less prosperous agricultural districts were almost completely by-passed.

In contrast to this practice of "cream skimming" by private utilities, the R. E. A. developed from the start the principle that a rural electric system must be planned to include every possible farm and every possible rural area. In its 5 years of existence, R. E. A. has financed power systems bringing electricity already to about 500,000 farm families and other rural users, many of whom could not otherwise have hoped to get this service. During the same period private utility companies have also increased the number of their rural customers by more than half a million.

This progress in farm electrification has amply disproved the hitherto widespread assumption that electricity is a luxury that farmers could not afford. Actually, electricity on the farm is a necessity. The farmer's productivity is increased the moment he puts electricity to work brooding chickens, lighting poultry houses to increase egg production, pumping water for stock, cooling milk, or doing any of the dozens of chores that can profitably be performed with electricity on the farm.

The beneficial effects of electricity upon farm life and the life of rural communities also have become more pronounced. An increasing number of farm families are finding themselves in a changing world. For the farm housewife it becomes a world of electric irons, electric refrigerators, electric washing machines, electric vacuum cleaners, and radios. All of the common appliances which had hitherto supplied comfort and convenience to urban homes exclusively are now at the service of the housewife, even at the most distant farm.

Rural communities, too, have undergone significant changes. Street lights and motion-picture houses now appear in villages and hamlets which were formerly clothed in darkness from sunset to sunrise. Schools, churches, and meeting halls have acquired new facilities and conveniences and have taken on new usefulness as community centers.

FARM USES OF ELECTRICITY

Anyone who has had to clean, fill, and trim oil lamps day after day or who has had to study or sew by lamplight during long winter evenings can readily understand the emphasis which the farmer today places upon the need of good lighting. It will be equally understood by anyone who has done chores by the light of an oil lantern, carrying it from place to place, hanging it first on this peg and then on that to keep from stumbling in the darkness.

More Chicks, Hens, and Eggs.—Poultry raising is the farm operation to which electricity is being applied most widely. There is scarcely an R. E. A.-financed system in the United States that is not helping some of its members to save money or to make money either by increasing egg production or by protecting baby chicks from freezing to death. Electricity enables almost any farmer to raise a flock of hens, even if only as a source for home-grown food.

Dairies.—If poultry raising is the most general farm use of electricity, dairying runs it a close second. The value of electrical coolers and milking appliances to dairy farms marketing fluid milk was recognized before R. E. A. was established. But during the past 4 years, electrical equipment has taken so important a place on the specialized dairy farm that the time is rapidly approaching when a commercial dairy farm will not be able to exist without electricity.

Other Productive Uses.—Household refrigerators often pay their way on the farm by reducing food spoilage, and also on smaller farms by providing storage space in which eggs can be kept fresh and cream sweet until marketed. Washing machines and hand irons free farm women for more productive tasks as well as relieve them of much drudgery. Even the radio may pay its way on the farm. The weather report giving timely warning of a frost may save fruit growers and market gardeners hundreds or even thousands of dollars by enabling them to get smudges started in time to protect their crops. In the southern Georgia tobacco belt, daily broadcasts during marketing season tell farmers how prices are running and where the next day's auctions will be held.

REDUCED COSTS

The principal social objective of the rural electrification program is to make electricity available to the greatest number of farm people at the lowest possible cost to them. Cutting the cost of building lines has therefore been a primary concern of R. E. A. from the very start. It has also evolved a wholly different approach to the problems of rural electrification which includes comprehensive area development, education in the profitable use of electrical power, lower service cost through mass construction and technological improvements, and cheaper rates by the distribution of electric power through farm cooperatives.

Chicks are Safe and Warm in an Electric Brooder.

Before R. E. A. was established, the average cost of rural lines ranged from $1,500 to $1,800 a mile. One of the first steps that R. E. A. took in reducing the cost of building rural power lines was to standardize on vertical construction, eliminating the cross arm on poles carrying two-wire circuits, and using one cross arm instead of two on poles carrying three or four circuits. The next step was to lengthen the spans between poles and take advantage of the new high-strength conductors.

R. E. A. is applying principles of mass-production to electric line construction. It substitutes assembly-line methods for the old practice of having a large crew descend on each pole location and remain there until the pole has been set. Crews are split up so that one group digs the holes, another drops the poles from the truck, a third attaches the hardware, a fourth raises the pole and tamps it down, and a fifth strings the wire. This system lowers costs and speeds up construction.

The cost of R. E. A.-financed lines now averages less than $800 a mile, or about half the former cost. This reduction has been achieved without any impairment in quality or in the durability of construction, as witnessed by the fact that private companies are now adopting the methods and techniques used by R. E. A.

Total construction costs for electric service to R. E. A. borrowers (including overhead charges, such as management costs and interest on borrowed funds) have declined steadily from an estimated average of $980 for the first 6 months of 1936 to $754 for the last 6 months of 1939.

The search for lower costs and for equipment best suited to rural use is a continuing part of the work of R. E. A. Improved transformers, meters equipped with a cyclometer register which shows the farmer at a glance how much electricity he has used, just as he can see at a glance how far his automobile has traveled, and line-maintenance equipment designed especially for rural conditions, have already been developed.

Service for Poorer Farms.—As the construction of rural lines goes forward, R. E. A.-financed systems necessarily move from reasonably prosperous areas into sections where farm incomes are considerably lower and agricultural resources more limited. R. E. A. is nevertheless determined to

extend to these poorer areas, so far as feasible on a self-liquidating basis, the social and economic benefits electricity has conferred upon the more prosperous communities. It seeks to show farmers in the poorer areas how electricity can be made to pay its own way and even contribute to their net income. Often the saving or profit from a farm use, such as brooding, poultry-house lighting, milk cooling, or feed grinding, enables a farm family to acquire such appliances as a refrigerator, washing machine, hand iron, or even a range that means so much to the farm homemaker.

Self-help projects are being developed to enable farmers further to reduce costs and cash outlays. Farmers are employed to help build the lines and are paid wages which enable them to have their houses wired and perhaps buy an occasional electrical appliance.

A special or limited service has been devised particularly for the low-income farmer who can afford no more than about a dollar a month for electricity. The transformer used in wiring these farms has sufficient capacity to permit simultaneous operation of a few light bulbs, a radio, and an electric iron. It cannot carry heavier loads and cannot be used for larger appliances. The sole purpose of this plan is to make the simplest benefits of electricity available to the thousands of farmers and their families who otherwise could not have it at all.

Wiring Farm Houses.—Credit facilities have been provided to farmers through 5-year loans to finance wiring and plumbing installations. These loans are made to the cooperatives and other agencies operating the electric power systems, which in turn relend the funds to members. The expense of wiring a farmstead has been reduced on the average 35 percent and in a few instances even more.

WORK OF COOPERATIVES

Farmer cooperatives, made up of a group of farmers in a locality or county, are the heart of the Federal rural electrification program. On March 31, 1940, 89 percent of the 691 R. E. A. borrowers were cooperatives. Of the $270,000,000 lent or earmarked by R. E. A., 92.3 percent had been set aside for cooperatives. The proportion of cooperatives to the total number of borrowers is constantly increasing, as is the percentage of funds set aside for these nonprofit, self-service farm organizations.

Figuring His Monthly Electric Bill.

The Rural Electrification Administration has found the farm cooperative and the public power district excellent organizations for the development of its rural electrification program. A cooperative is a nonprofit group that exists primarily to serve its members at cost. It need take in only sufficient revenue to meet its expenses and amortize the loan. Thus it can operate in a poorer and more thinly spread territory than can a utility corporation whose objective is primarily to obtain for its owners a profit on their investment. Then too, a cooperative is owned by the people whom it serves. The consumer of electric power is not merely a consumer but is a member of the cooperative. He has a voice in its affairs, and together with his fellow members controls its activities. The members learn to feel that the cooperative is their undertaking. They work for it as they never work for the success of an enterprise in which they have no personal interest.

Great improvement in community spirit has been observed in many areas where community or cooperative enterprise had been unknown prior to the development of an R. E. A. - financed system. The community spirit is a direct result of participation in the rural electrification program and contributes to a better understanding of democratic principles in social and business life.

A Quarter Century of Workmen's Compensation in the State of New York

FRIEDA S. MILLER, Industrial Commissioner

New York State Department of Labor

Half a billion dollars has been paid out by industry in New York State to nearly 2,000,000 injured workmen and their families since the workmen's compensation law became effective July 1, 1914. Instead of allowing these men and their families to become public charges or relief cases, and instead of filling old men's homes, orphanages, and other institutions, industry has paid its injured workers medical costs and a compensation in place of wages. It has guided them over periods of tragedy and great need, and in most cases has helped them get back to their jobs.

The workmen's compensation law in New York is administered by the State department of labor, but the cost of this administration, amounting to over $1,000,000 a year, is borne by industry through a system of insurance. On February 17 the State celebrated 25 years of its experience with this law, which was a pioneer throughout the country in its field and which has served as a pattern for much of the social legislation which has been enacted since.

The original New York State workmen's compensation law was enacted in 1910 but was declared unconstitutional. It became necessary, therefore, to amend the State constitution, specifically authorizing workmen's compensation legislation. The amendment was passed on November 4, 1913, and at a special session of the New York State Legislature the present workmen's compensation law was enacted.

Although a great step forward, the law had a modest beginning. During the first year, it is estimated, only about $6,600,000 was paid out in awards to 39,622 workmen and their families. In 1939 nearly $28,400,000 was paid out in workmen's compensation for 76,329 injuries.

Industrial accidents were found to follow closely the trend in general business conditions. More business and more employment generally meant more accidents. Thus, 1929 and 1930 were the only 2 years during which the number of compensable industrial accidents exceeded 100,000. The highest amount of compensation to injured workers was also paid out during these 2 years—about $34,300,000 in 1929 and about $36,600,000 in 1930. However, the increase in compensation paid over the 25-year period may also be explained by wider application of the law and by more liberal awards to injured workmen made possible by changes in the law. Indeed, the New York State workmen's compensation law has been amended over 150 times to meet changing industrial conditions in the State.

COVERAGE EXTENDED

Outstanding among the amendments was the addition in 1920 of 23 specific occupational diseases to the coverage of the law and the inclusion of all occupational diseases in 1935. The only occupational disease which still is not treated as fully as the others is silicosis, that dread dust disease which penetrates into the lungs of workers in mines, tunnels, and foundries, and builds scar tissue which bars oxygen from the blood streams of the workers affected. Efforts to increase the benefits to victims of silicosis were successful in the recent session of the State legislature. A bill was passed extending the compensable medical treatment from 270 to 450 days. Death benefits are to be increased gradually from a maximum of $3,000 to $5,000 by December 1943. The Department of Labor looks forward to the day when the family of a man who dies of silicosis will be compensated for its loss equally with the family of a man who dies, for instance, of lead poisoning.

BENEFITS LIBERALIZED

Not only has the coverage of the workmen's compensation law been extended, but the benefits also have been liberalized over the 25-year period. If a man was injured in 1914, his employer would pay his doctor bills for 60 days if necessary and longer only if required by the Industrial Board, then charged with the administration of the law.

In 1922 an amendment was passed requiring employers to provide medical treatment during the entire period of disability. In 1935 workers became free to choose their own physicians instead of depending on the "company doctor." At present, 18,000 physicians, approved by their county medical societies, are registered with the New York State Department of Labor to treat workmen's compensation cases.

In addition to paying for medical treatment, employers are required to pay their workers weekly allowances "in like manner as wages." These awards are roughly two-thirds of the of the worker's weekly wage, with a maximum which began at $15 and which since 1927 has been $25 a week. The law also contains a schedule of disability awards—that is, the number of weeks during which the employer would pay for the loss or partial loss, temporarily or permanently, of any member of the body. For example, in 1914 the law allowed 60 weeks' compensation for the loss of a thumb; in 1924 it was increased to 75 weeks. In the beginning a man who lost an eye could receive 128 weeks of compensation; in 1924 it was increased to 160 weeks.

In the beginning an injured workman received nothing for the 2 weeks immediately following the date of his injury. In 1925 this waiting period was reduced to 1 week and since 1935 an injured worker may receive compensation even for this first week if his disability lasts for a period of more than 5 weeks.

Maximum death benefits to the family or dependents of a worker killed by accident while on the job have been increased from $15 a week to about $23. If the worker leaves no dependents, a death benefit of $1,300 goes into certain State funds to rehabilitate industrial cripples and to relieve employers by paying awards to workers who suffer a second industrial accident while in their employ which renders them permanently and totally disabled.

SOCIAL VALUE OF LAW

In analyzing the accomplishments of the workmen's compensation law in the State of New York the Hon. Robert F. Wagner, United States Senator from New York, who as State senator in 1914 was chiefly responsible for the enactment of the law, said in part:

> When we observe the Silver Jubilee of the New York workmen's compensation law, we do more than celebrate the launching of a single piece of legislation, providing simple justice for the employee and insurance protection for his employer. We are celebrating the legislative beginnings of a concept of human adjustment between a government of the people and the people for whom that government exists—the concept of social security. Workmen's compensation, insurance against unemployment and against a destitute old age, are all the product of that same concept—that the economic and physical hazards of the machine age shall be borne by industry and society at large, instead of being permitted to lie where they fall, upon those least able to bear them. * * *
>
> With the coming of the factory era, men and women began to fall victim to industrial hazards, hazards that were intensified by unguarded machinery, by dimly lighted, ill-ventilated, and unsanitary workshops. The toll of deaths, maimings, lung diseases, and infections mounted steadily as society made greater and greater demands for the output of the machine.
>
> Against these hazards, and the resulting burden of dependency and want, the worker had no means of defense except a doubtful legal remedy in the courts, a remedy hedged about by technicalities and formulated for a handicraft era that had long since passed. That tragic situation bred endless recrimination between the injured workman and his employer. * * *
>
> The workmen's compensation law wiped the old slate clean. Instead of hurrying to his *lawyer's* office, the injured workman had first recourse to a *doctor's* care. In place of his doubtful legal remedy, we substituted the prompt, informal, and certain procedure of an administrative tribunal. In addition to cash compensation for loss of wages, we provided incentives for accident protection. The risk of loss, instead of falling on the employee and employer chosen by some whim of fate, was spread over all industry by an insurance system, actuarily sound and socially constructive. * * *

WHAT REMAINS TO BE DONE

The movement for safety in industry has made vast strides, especially in the State of New York. But our gains are in danger of being outstripped by the effects of new chemicals, more mechanization, ever greater speeds of production, and the increasing use of unskilled labor. Because of the impact of these new problems, and the lack of compulsory safety standards and inspection in many States, the economic loss from industrial hazards in all of American industry today is but slightly lower than a decade ago. Notwithstanding the benefits of workmen's compensation, from 50 to 80 percent of that economic loss is still borne by those who toil in the factory and in the mine. * * *

Our ultimate goal for the Nation as a whole is a rounded health service for industry, adequately financed and fully manned, embracing the cooperative efforts of Federal and State governments and the medical profession. This long-range plan should be an essential part of the national health program. With that program enacted into law, we will have completed a structure of social security worthy of our unmatched resources and our national heritage.

Strike Situation in 1939

Fewer stoppages of work arising from labor controversies occurred in the United States in 1939 than in 1938. Most of last year's strikes involved a relatively small number of workers and were quickly settled. A few disputes, however, covered large groups of workers and lasted more than a month. As a result, the total number of wage earners and total man-days of idleness caused by strikes in 1939 were somewhat greater than in 1938.

Data collected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics indicate that in 1939 about 1,171,000 workers were involved in 2,613 strikes which resulted in 17,812,000 man-days of idleness. This compares with a total of 2,772 strikes in 1938 involving approximately 688,000 workers and resulting in 9,148,000 man-days of idleness.

Jurisdictional strikes or strikes due to other disputes among rival unions constituted less than 6 percent of all stoppages of work recorded in 1939. Sit-down strikes, which received considerable attention several years ago, have almost completely disappeared. Only six such strikes were reported during the year.

OUTSTANDING DISPUTES

Bituminous-Coal Industry.—The largest stoppage of work in 1939 occurred in bituminous-coal mining. It arose over terms of renewal of the union agreement in the important Appalachian soft-coal producing area but was later extended to cover practically all bituminous-coal mines. At its height, it involved about 330,000 workers.

After prolonged direct negotiations between the United Mine Workers and the committee of bituminous-coal operators, the controversy was settled with the aid of the Conciliation Service of the United States Department of Labor. The union was recognized as the exclusive bargaining agency for all miners, and a union-shop provision requiring that workers employed in or about the mines must be members of the United Mine Workers was made a part of the agreements.

Most employers promptly signed such contracts with the union and production was resumed. In Harlan County, Ky., however, the strike continued for 2 additional months before the local association of coal operators agreed to recognize the union and sign an agreement.

W. P. A. Stoppage.—During the early part of July, W. P. A. workers in many sections of the country struck in protest against the abandonment by Congress in the 1940 relief appropriation bill of the prevailing-wage clause. The stoppages of work in a number of localities were led by local building trades councils of the A. F. of L. The number of W. P. A. workers who were idle for 1 day or more is estimated at about 123,000, although a considerably larger number participated in mass meetings and demonstrations which lasted less than a day.

Chrysler Dispute.—Charges by the union of speed-up of production work and counter-charges by management of a union-sponsored "slow-down" resulted in a stoppage of work in all plants of the Chrysler Corporation in October. The shut-down of operations affected about 50,000 workers and lasted for about 7 weeks. The dispute was settled with a wage increase of 3 cents an hour and the establishment of grievance machinery to handle production and other problems. The United Automobile Workers of America (C. I. O.) was recognized as the exclusive collective-bargaining agent for production employees in 11 of the 13 plants of the company in accordance with the results of elections previously conducted by the National Labor Relations Board.

SIGNIFICANT FEATURES

Industries Affected.—About one strike out of every five took place in the textile or wearing-apparel industries. Most of these disputes involved a relatively small number of workers and as a rule were quickly settled. Twelve percent of the total number of strikes occurred in building and construction, 11 percent in retail and wholesale trade, and about 10 percent in transportation and communication.

The greatest amount of idleness resulting from stoppages of work last year occurred in mining and the manufacture of transportation equipment, largely automobiles. Forty-two percent of the nearly 18,000,000 man-days of idleness caused by work stoppages was recorded in mining and about 15 percent in transportation equipment.

States and Cities.—Slightly more than one-fourth of all the country's strikes in 1939 took place in New York. The greatest number of

Industry distribution of strikes in 1939

Industry	Number of strikes	Workers involved	Man-days idle
All industries	2, 613	1, 171, 000	17, 812, 200
Manufacturing			
Textiles and clothing	539	90, 700	1, 321, 000
Lumber and products	170	31, 100	799, 500
Foodstuffs	148	29, 600	394, 900
Machinery and products	85	25, 000	433, 300
Paper and printing	58	5, 100	181, 700
Iron and steel	57	14, 500	212, 800
Transportation equipment	56	133, 600	2, 656, 300
Stone, clay, and glass	53	11, 400	136, 900
Other manufacturing industries	223	53, 200	1, 046, 300
Nonmanufacturing			
Building and construction	320	70, 100	633, 500
Wholesale and retail trade	283	26, 200	425, 700
Transportation and communication	252	86, 600	856, 900
Domestic and personal service	161	21, 100	277, 400
Extraction of minerals	64	383, 400	7, 464, 600
Agriculture and fishing	39	36, 800	477, 400
Other nonmanufacturing industries	105	152, 600	494, 000

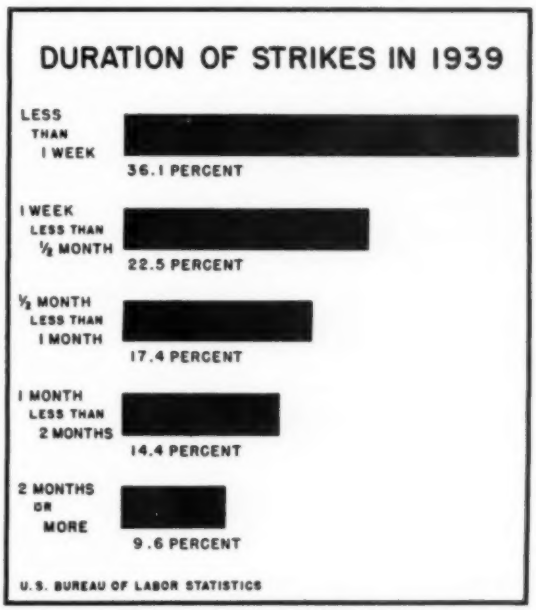
workers involved in strikes and the largest amount of idleness were registered in Pennsylvania. Michigan, although eighth among the States in the number of strikes, ranked next to Pennsylvania in the number of man-days of idleness.

Among the cities, New York's 597 strikes were by far the largest number for any city. Philadelphia was next with 95, followed by Los Angeles with 71, and San Francisco with 58. Idleness arising out of stoppages of work, however, was greatest in Detroit. New York was second, followed by San Francisco, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, and Chicago.

Causes of Strikes.—As in the several preceding years, the largest number of work stoppages were caused by issues over recognition of the union, the closed shop, and other problems pertaining to the desire of workers to organize and to bargain effectively with employers. Slightly more than half of the strikes in 1939, accounting for about three-fourths of the total days of idleness, arose from these issues. Changes in wages or hours were the major issue in about one-fourth of all the strikes. They involved about 30 percent of all the workers, but on the whole were adjusted with relatively little delay and accounted for only 18 percent of the total man-days of idleness.

Results.—Workers obtained substantially everything that they asked for in about 40 percent of the strikes ending in 1939. In about one-third of the strikes partial gains or compromise settlements were secured, and in most of the remaining disputes workers either obtained slight gains or lost the strike altogether.

Duration.—More than a third of the strikes in 1939 were settled in less than a week, and slightly more than three-fourths of all the strikes were settled in less than 1 month. About 20 percent of the workers involved were away from their jobs



less than 1 week and over half were away less than 1 month. Due primarily to the bituminous-coal and Chrysler strikes, a relatively large number of workers (41 percent) were involved in disputes which lasted from 1 to 2 months.

Method of Settlement.—Direct negotiations between employers and union officials resulted in the settlement of about 41 percent of the strikes ending in 1939. Federal, State, or city government officials or boards assisted in negotiating settlements for 38 percent of the strikes, which included most of the outstanding stoppages of work during the year. Of the 1,005 strikes settled with the assistance of government officials or boards, 970 were settled through conciliation and 35 were arbitrated.

Residential Building Construction in 1939

Approximately 465,000 new dwelling units for housing American families were constructed in nonfarm areas during 1939. This represents an increase of 118,000 units or 34 percent compared with 1938. Last year eight times as many dwelling units were built as in 1933, when new living quarters were constructed for only 54,000 families.

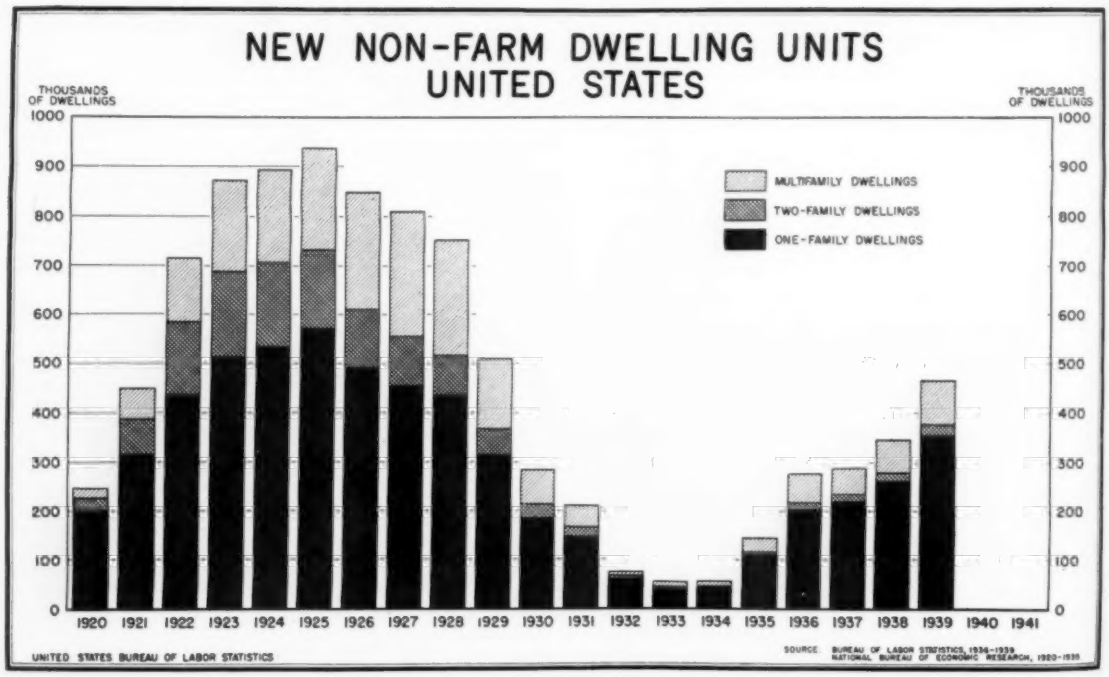
Despite the substantial gains of recent years, residential construction in the United States remains below the level of the 1920's. During the 10-year period 1920–29, slightly more than 700,000 new dwelling units were constructed on the average each year, compared with an annual average of about 220,000 during the 1930–39 decade.

Three out of every four of the new dwelling units erected last year were one-family houses. Apartment houses and other large multifamily dwellings constituted almost all of the remainder. Less than 5 percent of the dwelling units erected in 1939 were two-family houses. The large proportion of one-family dwelling units erected in recent years is in marked contrast with residential building activity of a decade ago, when apartment and other multifamily buildings constituted a more significant portion of the total residential construction.

New dwelling units erected in the three Middle Atlantic States of New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey aggregated 98,400. This was about 21 percent of the total number of dwelling units built last year.

About 56,700, or 12 percent, of the new dwelling units constructed last year in nonfarm areas were built with public funds largely through the activities of the United States Housing Authority. Slightly more than half of these residential units (28,400) were one-family houses, approximately 25,000 were multifamily or apartment houses, and 3,300 were two-family dwellings.

The total value of permits issued for new residential construction in 1939 is estimated at $1,612,000,000, compared with $1,248,000,000 in 1938. The average construction cost of a one-family dwelling erected in 1939 was about $4,450, as against $4,575 in the preceding year. This average does not include cost of the land, commissions of salesmen, and profits of builders realized in the sale of the houses.



Business and Economic Conditions in March 1940

Farm Income.—March cash income of farmers from the sale of farm products and from Government payments declined to $601,000,000, from $643,000,000 in February and $612,000,000 in March of last year. For the first quarter of 1940, cash farm income, including Government payments, amounted to $1,987,000,000, compared with $1,773,000,000 for the first 3 months of 1939.

Automobiles.—Output of passenger cars and trucks in March rose to 423,300 units. This is an increase of about 20,000 units over February and 51,400 more than in March a year ago.

Bituminous Coal.—About 35,400,000 tons of bituminous coal were mined in March. It compares with 39,100,000 tons in February and 35,440,000 tons in March of last year.

Building Construction.—Reports from 2,068 cities to the Bureau of Labor Statistics in March show a 20-percent increase in value of building permits issued. These permits called for expenditures estimated at $166,900,000—$28,500,000 more than in February but about $8,000,000 less than in the same month a year ago.

Electric Power.—Output of electric power in March is estimated at 11,290 million kilowatt-hours. It totaled 10,890 million kilowatt-hours in February, and 10,360 million kilowatt-hours in March a year ago.

Railroad Freight-Car Loadings.—About 624,500 cars of freight per week were hauled by class I railroads in March. This compares with 621,700 cars per week in February and 595,300 cars per week in March 1939.

Steel.—Approximately 4,236,000 tons of steel ingots were produced in March. In the preceding month output totaled 4,375,000 tons and in March a year ago about 3,405,000 tons of steel ingots were produced.

Trend of Industrial Production

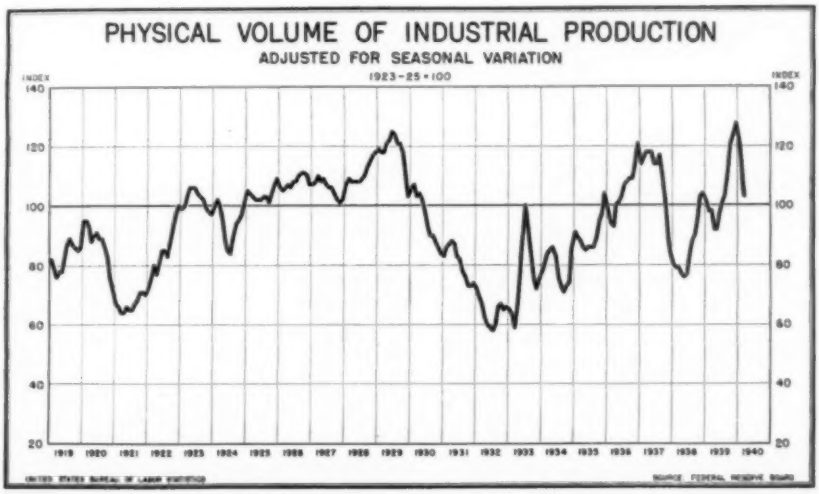
Industrial activity continued to decline in March, but the rate of decline was slower than in the 2 preceding months. The Federal Reserve Board's index of industrial production, which is adjusted for seasonal variations and for the number of working days in each month, was 103 compared with 109 in February, 119 in January, and 128 in December 1939.

Lumber and plate glass registered seasonal increases in output in March, but automobile assemblies did not show the customary spring rise. Production of woolen and cotton textiles dropped sharply, but rayon continued at a high level. Sales of general merchandise at department and variety stores and by mail order houses increased by about the usual amount.

Industrial Production
Adjusted Index
1923–25=100

1940	
March	[1] 103
February	109
January	119
1939	
December	128
November	124
October	121
September	111
August	103
July	101
June	98
May	92
April	92
March	98

[1] Preliminary.



Employment and Pay Rolls in March 1940

Largely as a result of a substantial addition of temporary employees in retail trade to handle Easter and spring business, total nonagricultural employment rose by 165,000 in March. The total number of workers employed in industries other than agriculture this March was estimated at 33,930,000 and was almost 1,000,000 larger than in March of last year.

In addition to retail trade, quarries and anthracite mines recorded slight gains in employment. Private building construction, electric light and power, laundries, and dyeing and cleaning establishments also had more workers on their pay rolls in March than in the preceding month.

Ordinarily, nearly 90,000 additional workers obtain factory jobs between the middle of February and the middle of March. This year, however, reports to the Bureau of Labor Statistics from 90 manufacturing industries indicate that approximately 55,000 workers were laid off during the month. The largest declines were 24,500 in woolen mills, 24,000 in steel mills, 15,000 in cotton goods, and 5,500 in hosiery. Smaller employment declines were registered in a number of other manufacturing industries, including foundries and machine shops, hardware, and silk and rayon goods.

Gains in factory employment in March were recorded in some industries directly or indirectly stimulated by Government and wartime orders. Aircraft and machine tools reported new peaks in employment and shipbuilding was at the highest level since 1921. Automobile plants and glass factories also hired more men.

DURABLE-GOODS INDUSTRIES

Employment.—About 12,300 fewer workers had jobs in durable-goods manufacturing in March. Declines of 29,300 in iron and steel and smaller declines in machinery manufacturing, lumber, and nonferrous metals more than offset the gains of 10,600 in transportation equipment and 9,300 in stone, clay, and glass.

Over the year interval, March 1939 to March 1940, however, employment in the durable-goods groups of manufacturing industries advanced 466,600. The gains over the 12-month period ranged from 10,600 in stone, clay, and glass and 33,200 in nonferrous metals to 113,400 in transportation equipment and approximately 162,100 in machinery manufacturing.

Estimated employment and pay rolls in manufacturing industries

[March 1940, February 1940, and March 1939]

Industry	Number of workers employed			Amount of weekly pay roll		
	March 1940[1]	February 1940[2]	March 1939	March 1940[1]	February 1940[2]	March 1939
All Industries	**7,948,500**	**8,002,500**	**7,443,900**	**$185,818,000**	**$185,438,000**	**$166,158,000**
Durable-goods groups	*3,705,300*	*3,717,600*	*3,238,700*	*97,367,000*	*96,764,000*	*79,562,000*
Iron and steel	922,400	951,700	814,700	24,513,000	25,677,000	21,255,000
Machinery	999,800	1,001,300	837,700	28,835,000	28,429,000	22,257,000
Transportation equipment	657,200	646,600	543,800	21,151,000	20,344,000	15,785,000
Nonferrous metals	267,100	267,200	233,900	6,880,000	6,785,000	5,656,000
Lumber	605,100	606,500	565,000	11,117,000	10,937,000	9,810,000
Stone, clay, glass	273,700	264,400	263,100	6,085,000	5,799,000	5,815,000
Nondurable-goods groups	*4,243,200*	*4,284,900*	*4,205,200*	*88,451,000*	*88,674,000*	*86,596,000*
Textiles	1,675,800	1,718,500	1,707,600	28,259,000	28,916,000	28,920,000
Leather	317,700	321,200	336,100	5,606,000	5,768,000	6,245,000
Food	788,900	789,100	766,900	17,783,000	17,539,000	16,954,000
Tobacco	88,100	85,300	84,300	1,291,000	1,202,000	1,186,000
Paper and printing	607,500	608,800	590,100	16,313,000	16,146,000	15,668,000
Chemicals	406,000	400,100	384,500	10,943,000	10,865,000	9,997,000
Rubber	117,300	118,200	111,200	3,062,000	3,057,000	2,885,000
Unclassified	241,900	243,700	224,500	5,194,000	5,181,000	4,741,000

[1] Preliminary. [2] Revised.

Weekly Pay Rolls.—In contrast to the decline in employment, weekly pay rolls in durable-goods manufacturing in March rose $603,000. With the exception of iron and steel, all durable-goods groups of manufacturing industries reported higher weekly wages.

Total weekly pay rolls in durable-goods manufacturing were $17,800,000 higher this March than in the same month a year ago. Increases in weekly pay rolls varied from $270,000 in stone, clay, and glass to $5,366,000 in transportation equipment and approximately $6,578,000 in machinery manufacturing.

NONDURABLE-GOODS INDUSTRIES

Employment.—For all nondurable-goods groups combined, employment declined 41,700 in March. Reductions in textiles, leather, paper and printing, rubber, foodstuffs, and the unclassified group of industries were only slightly offset by increases in chemicals and tobacco.

Comparison with March 1939 indicates that approximately 38,000 more workers had jobs this March in industries manufacturing nondurable-goods products. With the exception of textiles and leather, the level of employment in March was higher than a year ago in all nondurable-goods groups of industries.

Weekly Pay Rolls.—Weekly wage payments to workers employed declined $657,000 in textiles and $162,000 in leather. Despite higher pay rolls in all the remaining nondurable-goods groups of industries, total wage payments in March for all groups combined were $223,000 per week below February.

However, total weekly pay rolls in nondurable-goods manufacturing were $1,855,000 higher in March 1940 than in March a year ago. Increases aggregated $946,000 in chemicals, $829,000 in foodstuffs, $177,000 in rubber, $105,000 in tobacco, and $453,000 in the unclassified industries. Pay-roll declines over the year interval amounted to $661,000 per week in textiles and $639,000 per week in leather.

Trend of Employment and Pay Rolls in Manufacturing Industries

The Bureau of Labor Statistics index of factory employment recorded a further slight decline in March. It was, however, nearly 7 percent higher than in March 1939. Based on average employment in the 3 years 1923–25 as 100, the index stood at 100.7 in March, compared with 101.4 in the preceding month and 94.3 in March 1939.

Total weekly factory pay rolls rose slightly in March and were nearly 12 percent larger than in the same month a year ago. The pay-roll index of the Bureau shows that for every $1,000 disbursed in wages in 1923–25, manufacturing industries paid out on the average $979 in March, $977 in February, and $876 in March 1939.

Factory Pay-Roll Index

1923–25=100

1940	
March	[1] 97.9
February	97.7
January	98.3
1939	
December	103.6
November	101.8
October	101.6
September	93.6
August	89.7
July	84.4
June	86.5
May	85.0
April	85.5
March	87.6

[1] Preliminary.

Hours of Work and Earnings in Manufacturing Industries

The average workweek of 37½ hours and average hourly earnings of 66½ cents and weekly earnings of about $25.45 for workers employed in manufacturing industries in March were about the same as in the preceding month. Factory employment this March averaged about the same number of hours per week as in March 1939. Hourly earnings advanced slightly more than 2 cents, and weekly earnings averaged approximately $1.10 higher than a year ago.

In five selected durable- and five nondurable-goods manufacturing industries average weekly hours of work and average hourly and weekly earnings in March 1940 were:

Durable-goods manufacturing

Weekly hours:
- 40.5 in foundries and machine shops.
- 37.5 in automobiles.
- 37.5 in sawmills.
- 35.0 in brick manufacturing.
- 34.5 in blast furnaces and rolling mills.

Hourly earnings (in cents):
- 94.0 in automobiles.
- 84.0 in blast furnaces and rolling mills.
- 72.5 in foundries and machine shops.
- 55.5 in brick manufacturing.
- 49.0 in sawmills.

Weekly earnings:
- $35.50 in automobiles.
- $29.45 in foundries and machine shops.
- $28.90 in blast furnaces and rolling mills.
- $19.55 in brick monufacturing.
- $18.50 in sawmills.

Nondurable-goods manufacturing

Weekly hours:
- 40.0 in slaughtering and meat packing.
- 39.5 in paper and pulp.
- 36.0 in petroleum refining.
- 35.5 in cotton-goods manufacturing.
- 33.5 in tires and inner tubes.

Hourly earnings (in cents):
- 97.0 in petroleum refining.
- 96.5 in tires and inner tubes.
- 68.0 in slaughtering and meat packing.
- 63.5 in paper and pulp.
- 41.0 in cotton-goods manufacturing.

Weekly earnings:
- $34.95 in petroleum refining.
- $32.05 in tires and inner tubes.
- $27.25 in slaughtering and meat packing.
- $25.15 in paper and pulp.
- $14.60 in cotton-goods manufacturing.

Employment, Pay Rolls, Wages, and Hours in Selected Nonmanufacturing Industries

	March 1940 [1]	Increase or decrease: February 1940 to March 1940	Increase or decrease: March 1939 to March 1940
Retail trade		*Percent*	*Percent*
Employment	3,473,400	+4.1	+4.4
Weekly pay roll	$71,789,000	+3.3	+5.4
Weekly hours	42.5	−1.0	[2]
Hourly earnings	$0.54	−.6	[2]
Weekly earnings	$21.15	−.8	+1.0
Wholesale trade			
Employment	1,450,900	+.1	+3.3
Weekly pay roll	$45,094,000	+1.0	+4.2
Weekly hours	42.5	+3.6	+.8
Hourly earnings	$0.70	−3.1	−.5
Weekly earnings	$29.90	+.8	+.9
Metal mining			
Employment	72,800	−.1	+8.6
Weekly pay roll	$2,066,000	−1.9	+17.4
Weekly hours	41.0	−.7	+3.1
Hourly earnings	$0.73	−1.3	+5.0
Weekly earnings	$29.80	−1.9	+8.1
Bituminous coal			
Employment	411,900	−2.1	+2.7
Weekly pay roll	$8,688,000	−9.6	+1.1
Weekly hours	26.5	−8.8	−1.7
Hourly earnings	$0.89	+1.1	+.1
Weekly earnings	$23.75	−7.7	−1.6
Telephone and telegraph			
Employment	382,200	−.1	+1.9
Weekly pay roll	$12,403,000	+1.5	+4.7
Weekly hours	39.5	+1.0	−.3
Hourly earnings	$0.81	+.6	+1.8
Weekly earnings	$31.85	+1.6	+2.8
Hotels			
Employment	268,200	−.3	−.9
Weekly pay roll	$4,081,000	−.5	+1.5
Weekly hours	47.0	+.9	+1.8
Hourly earnings	$0.33	−1.2	+1.1
Weekly earnings	$15.50	−.3	+2.4
Power and light			
Employment	245,300	+.3	+2.8
Weekly pay roll	$8,535,000	+.2	+4.4
Weekly hours	40.5	+1.1	+1.3
Hourly earnings	$0.86	−.8	−.5
Weekly earnings	$34.70	−.1	+1.6
Street railways and busses			
Employment	191,100	−.9	−1.2
Weekly pay roll	$6,480,000	−2.7	+.3
Weekly hours	46.5	−.6	+1.8
Hourly earnings	$0.72	−.3	+.9
Weekly earnings	$33.70	−1.9	+1.5
Laundries			
Employment	222,300	+.4	+3.5
Weekly pay roll	$3,665,000	+1.2	+6.1
Weekly hours	43.0	+.3	+.5
Hourly earnings	$0.42	+.6	+2.2
Weekly earnings	$17.90	+.8	+2.5
Dyeing and cleaning			
Employment	58,200	+6.1	+4.2
Weekly pay roll	$1,047,000	+12.6	+7.2
Weekly hours	42.5	+4.8	+.1
Hourly earnings	$0.49	+1.1	+2.4
Weekly earnings	$20.00	+6.2	+2.9

[1] Preliminary. [2] Not available.

What Happened to Prices in March 1940

Wholesale Prices.—The level of wholesale commodity prices declined slightly in March but was 2.2 percent higher than a year ago. The Bureau of Labor Statistics index was 78.4 in March, as against 78.7 in the preceding month and 76.7 in March of last year.

Index of wholesale prices

Item	1926=100		Increase (+) or decrease (−), March 1939 to March 1940
	March 1940	March 1939	
	Index	*Index*	*Percent*
All commodities	78.4	76.7	+2.2
Farm products	67.9	65.8	+3.2
Raw materials	72.0	70.1	+2.7
Semimanufactured articles	79.7	74.6	+6.8
Finished products	81.1	80.2	+1.1

Retail Food Prices.—Averaged for the country as a whole, retail food prices were slightly lower in March but slightly higher than in March of last year. Based on the 1926 average as 100, the Bureau's retail food index was 71.1 in March, 71.9 in February, and 70.4 in March 1939.

Average retail food prices for the country as a whole

Item	March 1940	Increase (+) or decrease (−) March 1939 to March 1940	
	Cents	*Cents*	*Percent*
Bread, pounds	8.2	+0.2	+2.5
Butter, do	35.8	+4.3	+13.7
Milk, delivered, quart	13.0	+.6	+4.8
Eggs, dozen	29.1	+.1	+.3
Potatoes, peck	38.0	+3.7	+10.8
Lard, pound	9.5	−1.5	−13.6
Pork chops, do	24.5	−5.7	−18.9
Round steak, do	33.8	−2.0	−5.6
Sugar, 10 pounds	52.9	+1.8	+3.5
Coffee, pound	21.8	−1.0	−4.4

Government Employment and Relief in March 1940

Work Projects.—The number of persons employed on work relief projects operated by the Work Projects Administration declined from approximately 2,250,000 in February to 2,212,000 in March. Total wage payments to the workers employed on these projects rose from nearly $111,475,000 in February to about $120,700,000 in March.

Construction Projects.—Employment and earnings provided at the site of construction on Government projects in March were:

Project	Employment	Earnings
All construction projects	448,100	$39,785,000
Regular Federal Government appropriations	220,300	22,960,000
Public Works Administration	97,800	9,310,000
Financed by Work Projects Administration	94,300	4,350,000
United States Housing Authority	33,400	2,900,000
Reconstruction Finance Corporation	2,300	265,000

C. C. C. and N. Y. A.—Approximately 306,000 enrolled workers, camp supervisors, and instructors in the Civilian Conservation Corps earned $13,710,000 in wages in March. The National Youth Administration provided jobs to about 810,000 boys and girls at a total pay roll of $9,540,000.

General Relief.—Reports from 106 urban areas to the Social Security Board indicate that approximately 785,400 families and single persons received $22,790,000 in relief payments in March. This was a decline of 2 percent from February.

Federal Service.—Employment and earnings in the Federal Government service in March were:

Service	Employment	Earnings
Executive [1]	945,800	$143,900,000
Military	456,800	32,275,000
Legislative	5,860	1,300,000
Judicial	2,380	578,000

[1] Includes about 121,600 force-account, supervisory, and technical employees with a total pay roll of $16,042,000 shown under other classifications.

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